



June 24th, 2013

Attention Media Representatives:

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Monday, June 24th, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Bixby to Launch New Community Mass Notification System, Blackboard Connect

(Bixby, OK) On Wednesday, June 26th, City of Bixby officials will launch their community's new Blackboard Connect mass notification system, using a pre-recorded test message from Bixby Mayor Ray Bowen, to make automated phone calls to each resident's land-line phone. Using this service, city leaders will be able to send voice messages to residents and businesses within minutes with specific information about time-sensitive or important common-interest issues such as emergencies and local community matters. The service also includes weather alert advisories to warn area residents of imminent weather emergencies. The Blackboard Connect service will be used to supplement the City's current communication plans and enhance public safety/first responder services, and keep citizens informed.

"Bixby is already known for being the safest city in the state for communities its size, due to its relatively low crime rate," Bixby Manager Doug Enevoldsen said. "We are now pleased to offer this new emergency notification service at no charge to our residents, it being one of several initiatives we are undertaking to further ensure area families' safety and help keep them informed."

The new mass communication tool was authorized by the Bixby City Council in May of this year. Bixby residents' land line phone numbers have been pre-loaded into the city's new system. Citizens may, at their discretion, opt-out of the land-line notification. Bixby officials, however, recommend citizens not only maintain their land-line connections, but take the further simple step to register their family members' mobile devices into the system. They may do so by accessing the Bixby website at www.bixby.com and clicking the Blackboard Connect image to sign up.

"Many people do not have land-lines and will not be in our system on day one. Most people with land lines also have mobile devices on which they increasingly rely in order to stay informed. For those reasons, we strongly recommend each family enroll their mobile devices into our new Blackboard Connect emergency notification system, for their own safety and peace of mind. It's simple to do. It's free. It's secure. And it's in everyone's interest to be connected," said Bixby Police Chief Ike Shirley, who also serves as the community's Director of Emergency Management.

Bixby's Blackboard Connect system also allows citizens the option of receiving messages in the form of either an e-mail or MMS/text message, by setting their individual preferences on the city's web site.

For more information visit the City of Bixby website at www.bixby.com. (30)